

Emergency Shelter Facility Grant Program Update
Interim Budget Committee Section F
March 13, 2024

HB 5 appropriated \$5 million to fund the Emergency Shelter Facility Grant (ESFG) program. The legislation limited the total amount that could be awarded in any one county to \$750,000. A one for one match from private sources is required.

As defined in the legislation, "Emergency shelter" means any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. Eligible applicants are nonprofit corporations, as defined in the legislation.

Application Summary:

- Commerce received eleven (11) applications from seven (7) communities, totaling \$5,938,912 in requests by the November 30, 2023 application deadline.
- Multiple applications were submitted for Missoula County (3), Gallatin County (2) and Yellowstone County (2). However, requests exceeded \$750,000 in only one county - Yellowstone.
- Commerce consulted with Yellowstone County Commissions for their input on the two application requests submitted which exceeded the \$750,000 per county limit. Commissions indicated support for the Montana Rescue Mission project.

Quantifying the Need for Additional and/or Improved Emergency Shelter Space:

- SAFE, serving the Bitterroot Valley, reported in 2022 they had 42 requests for assistance from those fleeing domestic violence who they were unable to serve. In 2023, that number increased to 90. Their average occupancy rate has increased from 98% over the last five years to 118% in 2022 and 2023. Previously, SAFE was able to provide shelter temporarily in hotels; now, hotel rooms are seldom available.
- Providers in Yellowstone County quoted their point-in-time survey results that documented 598 individuals seeking shelter, 210 of whom are chronically homeless. In Billings, there are 337 households on the waiting list for public housing and/or housing assistance.
- Statistics in the Flathead show there were 263 individuals experiencing homelessness in 2023. During the coldest nights last winter, when all shelter and even temporary resources were full, as many as 27 individuals went without shelter.
- Lewis & Clark County has seen a 150% increase in demand for shelter over the last three years. The January 2023 count found 164 homeless individuals, including 40 women.
- Missoula and Bozeman presented statistics regarding the sharp increase in housing costs, which has rendered the precariously housed now homeless. Bozeman saw a 42% increase in homelessness during 2023; Missoula had 46% increase in demand for winter shelter space, and 53% increase in the elderly and disabled who are experiencing homelessness.
- Butte-Silver Bow has been without a permanent location for its shelter staff while serving 342 individuals in 2023, representing 14,247 shelter nights.

County	Project	Type	ESFG Award	Total Project Cost
Flathead	Samaritan Housing Building Stability	Rehab	\$750,000	\$7,344,649
Gallatin	Family Promise of Gallatin County	Rehab	\$187,500	\$1,984,815
Gallatin	HRDC 9	New Construction	\$562,500	\$16,150,000
Lewis & Clark	Good Samaritan Ministries	Rehab	\$559,738*	\$1,388,590
Missoula	Mountain Home Montana	Rehab	\$369,183	\$5,769,624
Missoula	Poverello Center	Rehab	\$228,593	\$228,593
Missoula	YWCA Missoula	Rehab	\$91,136	\$182,272
Ravalli	SAFE	Rehab Expansion	\$750,000	\$3,273,462
Silver Bow	Butte Rescue Mission	Rehab	\$750,000	\$2,359,683
Yellowstone	Montana Rescue Mission	Rehab	\$750,000	\$13,767,076
		TOTAL	\$4,998,650	\$52,448,764

- Total project costs are estimated at over \$52.4 million, representing a 10:1 leverage of funds.
- *Good Samaritan Ministries conditionally received funding subject to securing a new shelter location in Helena. This tentative award is conditioned on Good Samaritan providing Commerce a viable proposal that complies with ESFG program requirements by May 1, 2024. At that time, Commerce will reassess Good Samaritan’s proposal to determine whether to make an actual award.

Start-up Conditions (abbreviated):

- Banking information (W-9, EFT Forms)
- Compliance with Montana Environmental Protection Act (MEPA)
- Compliance with applicable procurement standards
- Execute contract with Commerce

Going Forward:

- Commerce will receive updates on construction activities
- Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis based on submitted invoices
- Goal is to ensure projects are under contract within 6 months, with construction activities beginning this calendar year

Proposed Reporting Requirements:

Commerce intends to align ESG reporting requirements with other existing emergency shelter reporting requirements, such as those under the Homeless Management Information Services (HMIS) system.

Facility-level information:

- Details about shelter expansion or shelter improvements to safety and accessibility.
Example: quantify the increase in number of shelter beds per night/month/year.
- Details on new construction and/or site acquisition, if applicable.

Client-level demographic information:

- Race, ethnicity, age, disability, household size, Veteran status, families with minor children etc.
- Details on where client had been living previously.
Example: Living in car, place not meant for human habitation etc.

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Montana Department of Commerce for their generous support of the Butte Rescue Mission. They recently allocated nearly \$5 million of ESG funding to 10 non-profits, including the Butte Rescue Mission, to support homeless shelters with new construction, capital improvements, and space acquisition. Thank you for your dedication to creating meaningful change and for standing as a source of light in challenging times."

~ Butte Rescue Mission